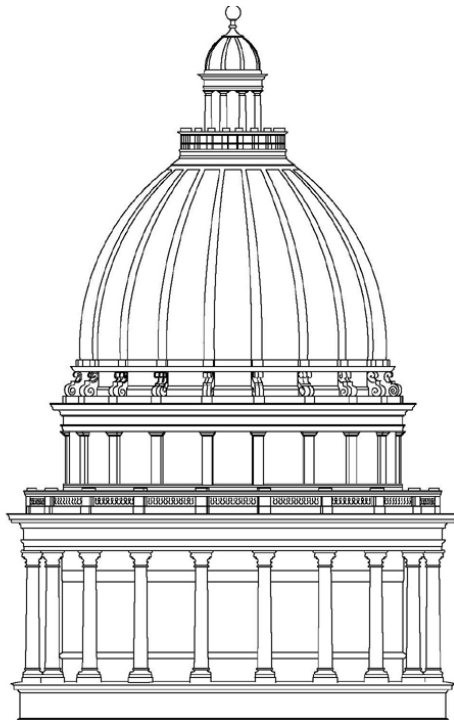
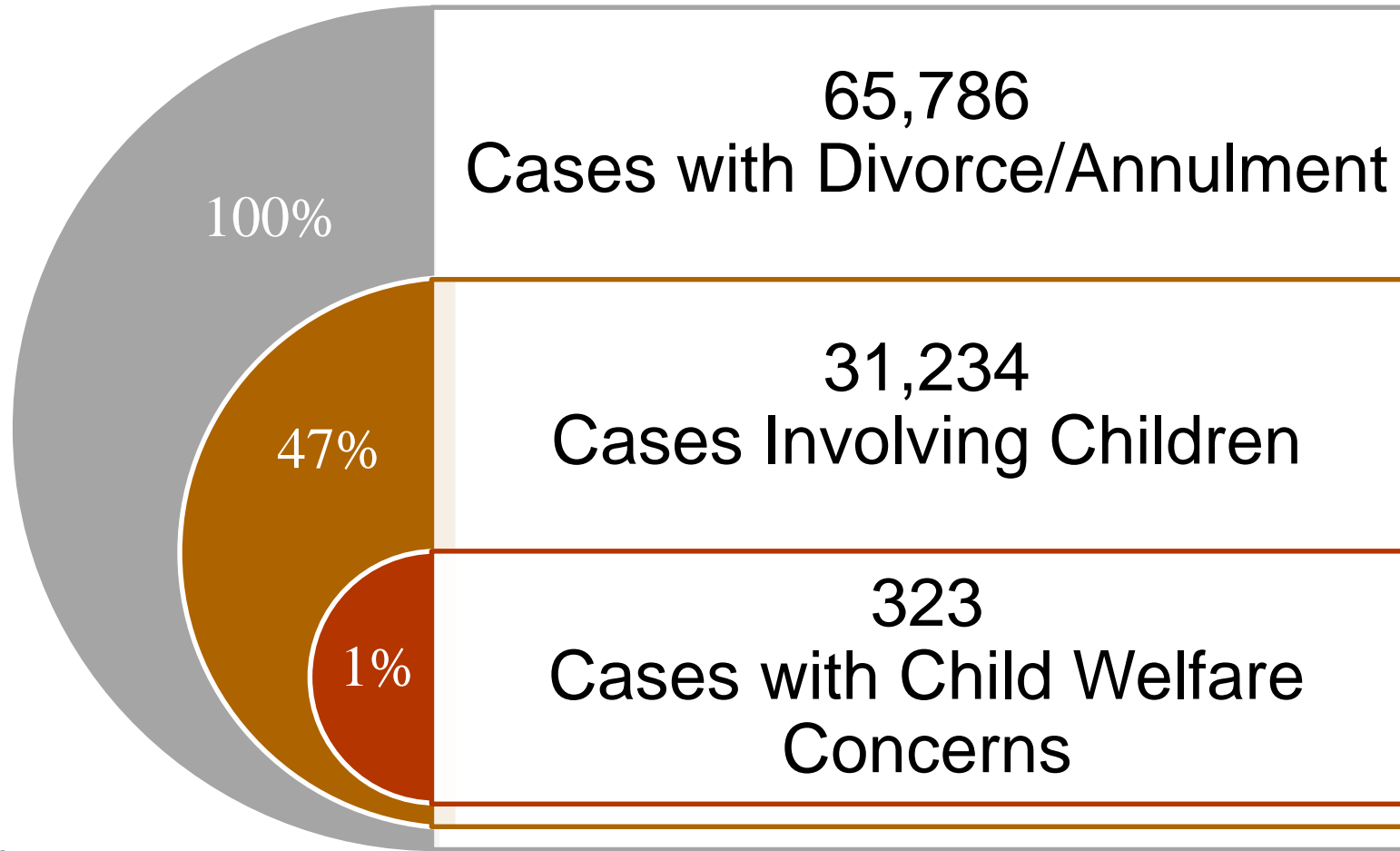


A Performance Audit of Child Welfare During Divorce Proceedings



A Report by the
Office of the Utah Legislative
Auditor General

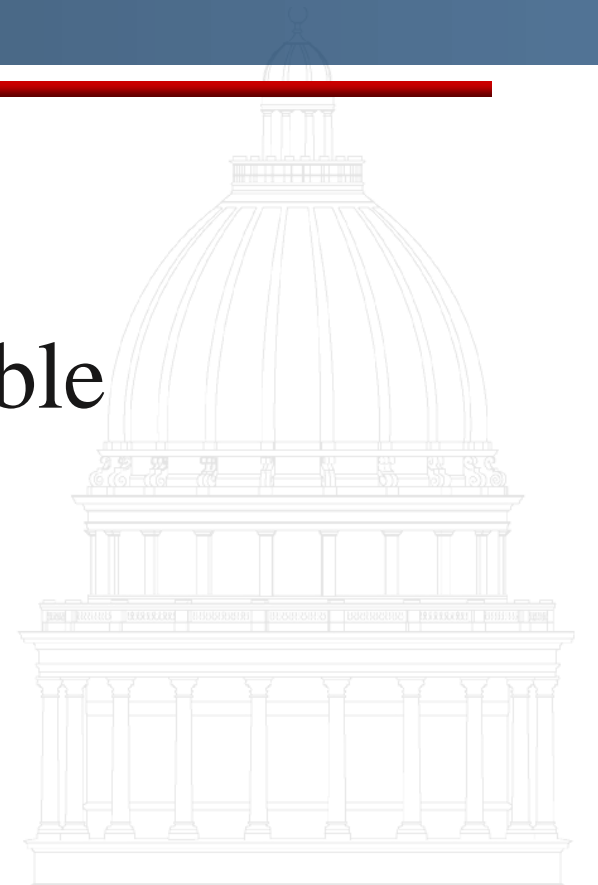
Few Divorce Cases Involve Child Welfare Concerns



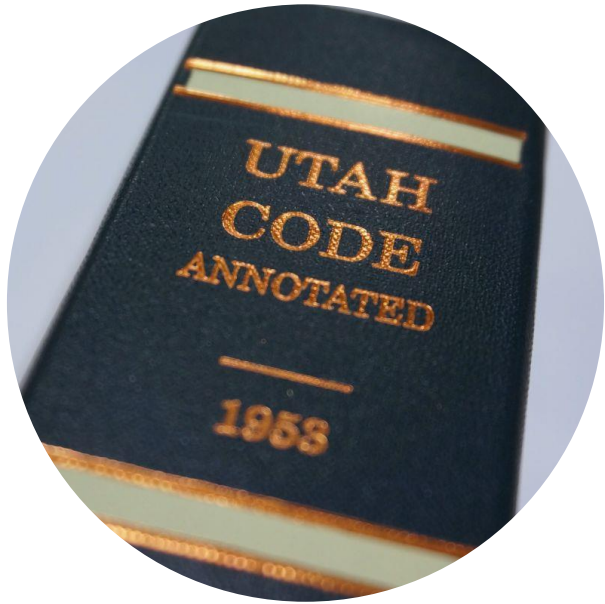
See Report: Page 2

Chapter II

Child Protections Appear Reasonable

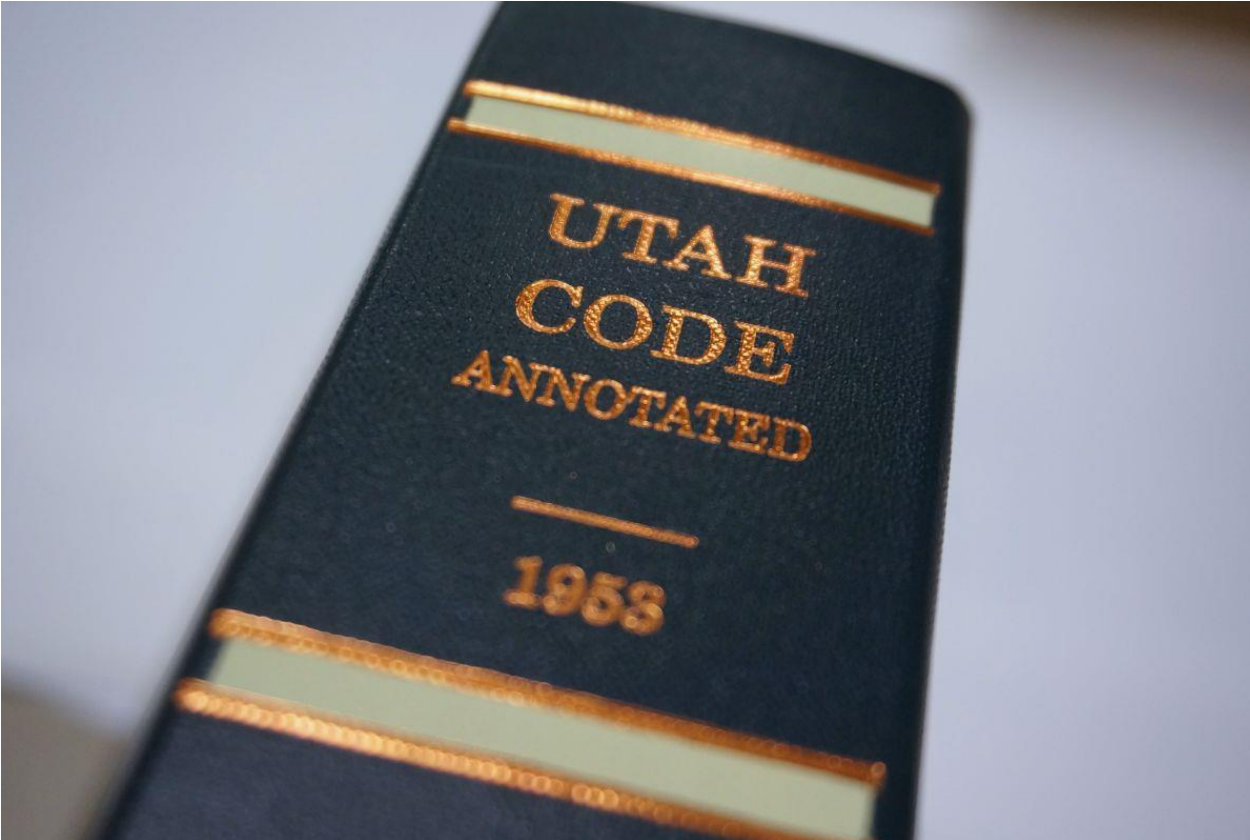


Existing Child Welfare Controls Appear Appropriate



See Report: Page 7 - 11

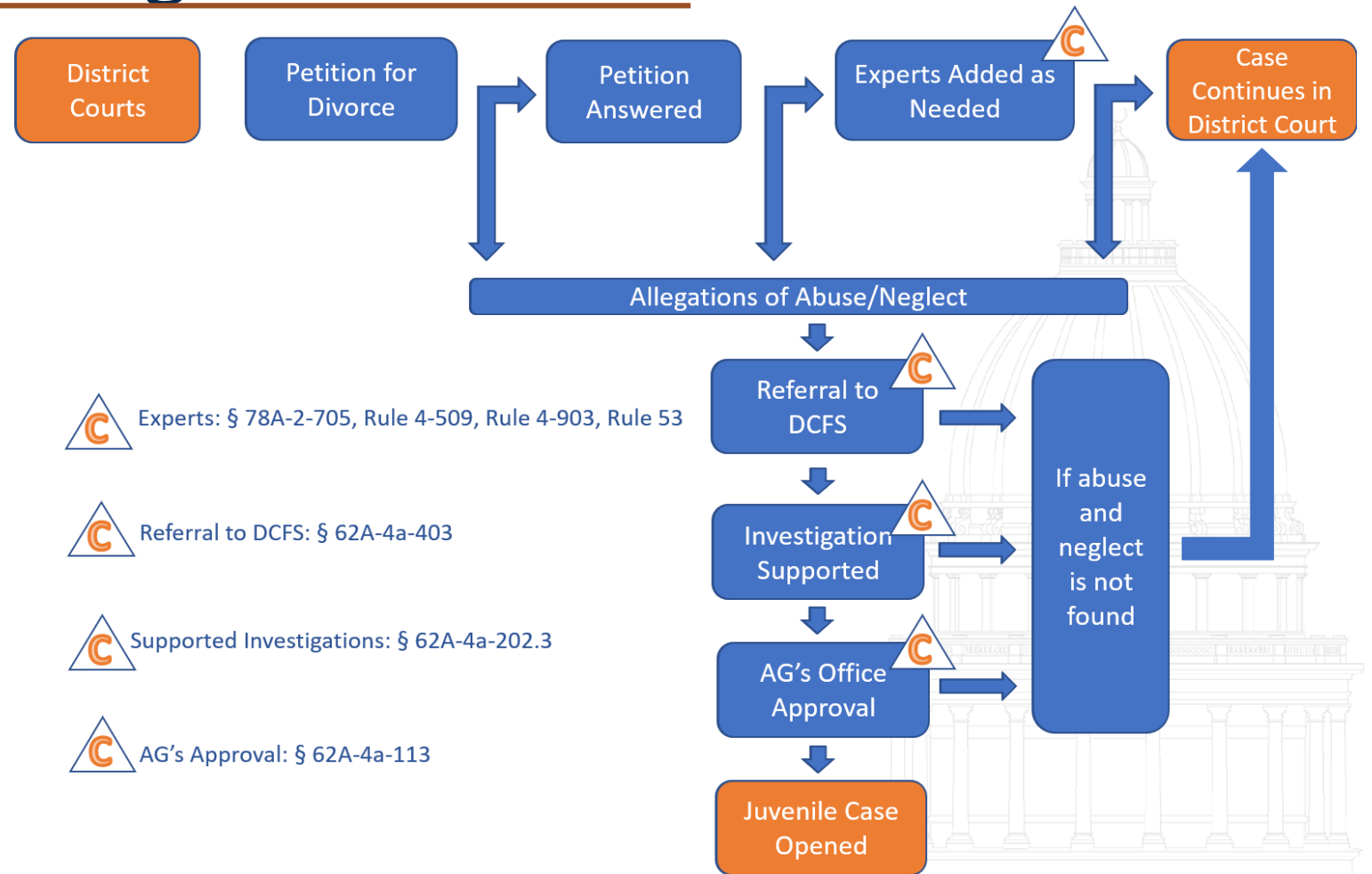
Statute Is Designed to Balance Child Protections and Parental Rights



- 1 Duty to Report
- 2 DCFS Investigation
- 3 Guardian ad Litem

See Report: Page 8 - 9

Reviewed Cases Indicate Child Welfare Agencies Are Protecting Children



See Report: Pages 9 - 11

Child Welfare Experts Report

Existing Process Protects Children



"There are tools in place that are available to judges to ensure children are being protected."

Courts



"The system is working and is well designed to protect child welfare."

Division of
Child and
Family
Services



"I don't have any ideas at present of systemic changes that would be beneficial to the process."

Attorney
General's
Office



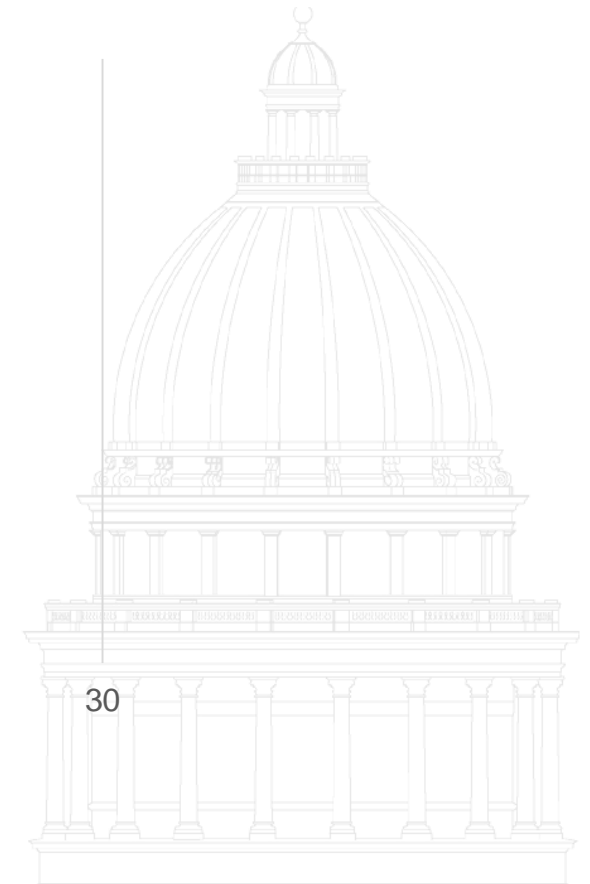
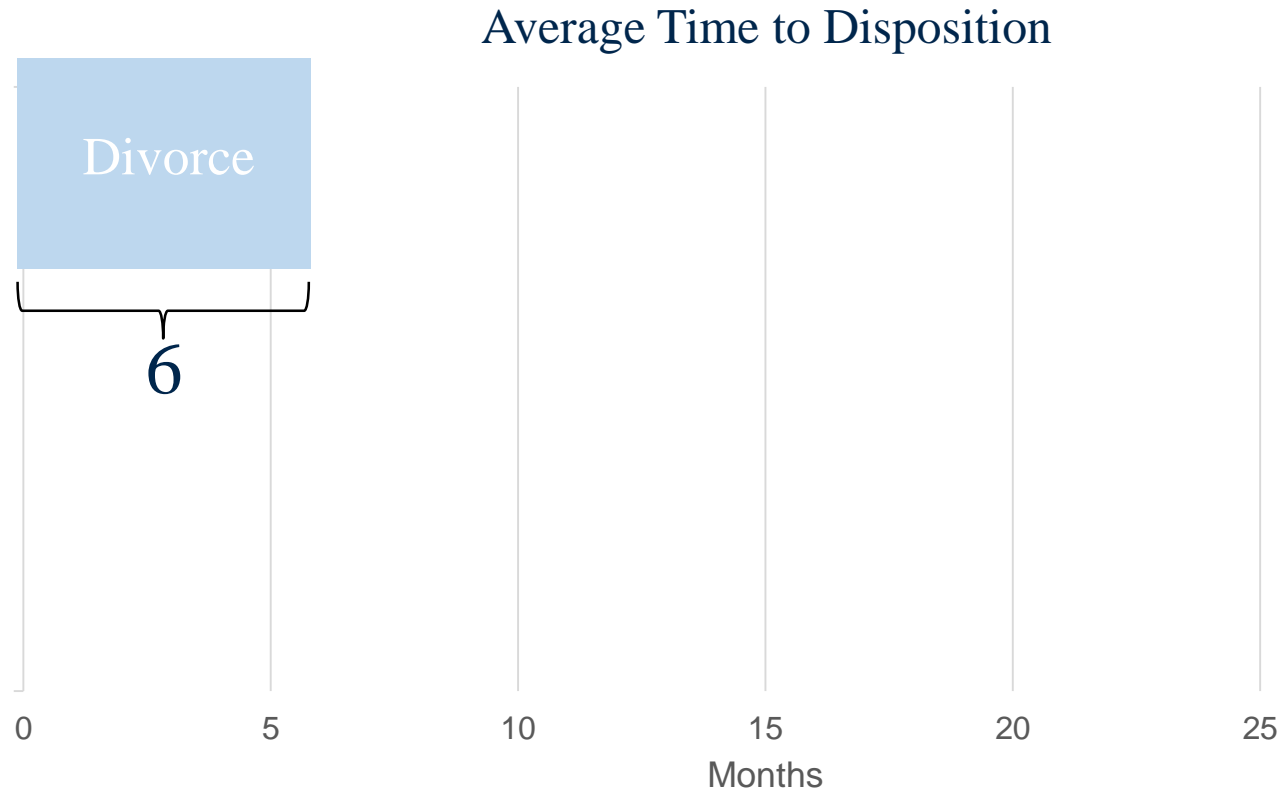
"Commissioners do a good job of figuring out when there's been abuse and neglect."

Office of the
Guardian ad
Litem



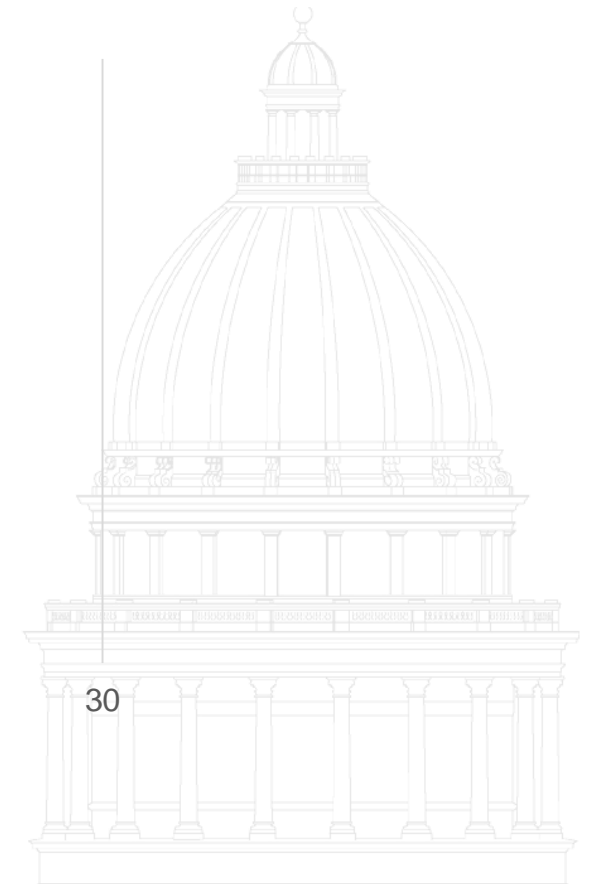
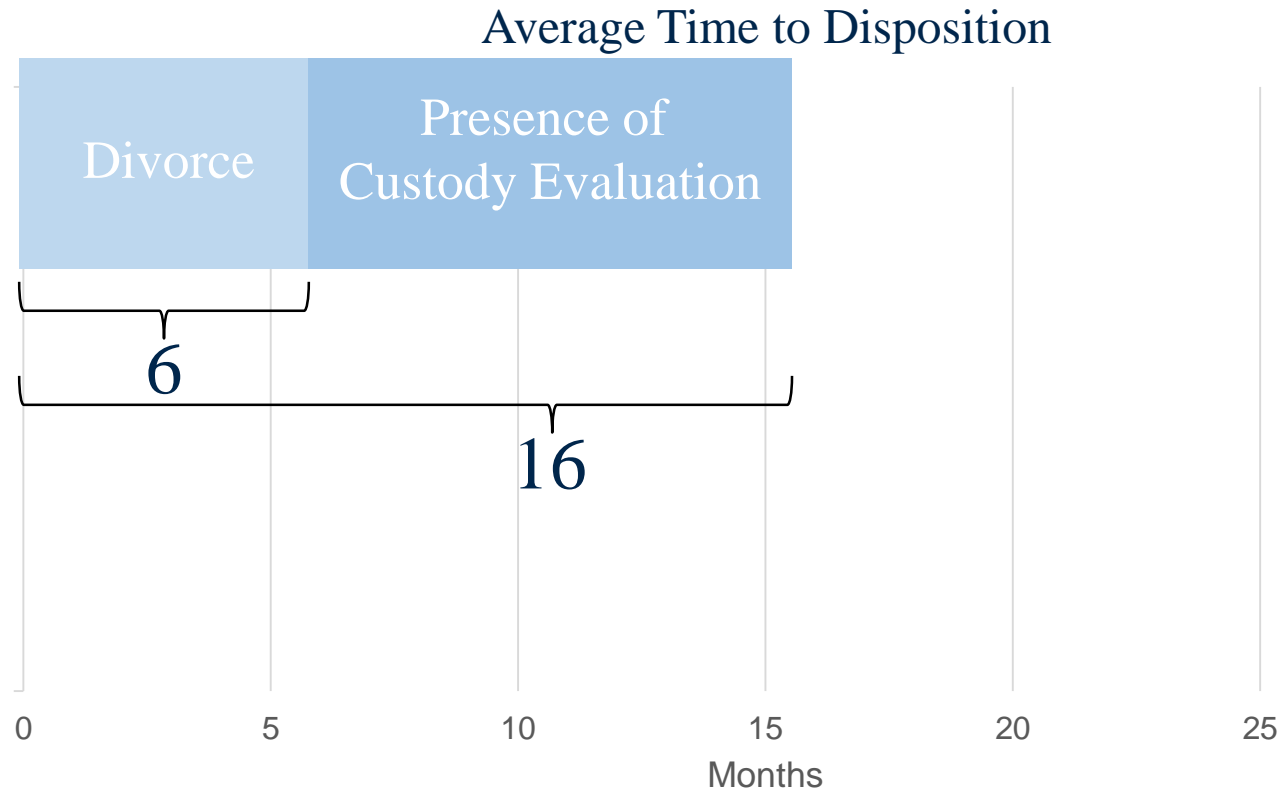
See Report: Page 11

Disputes Over Children Significantly Extend Time Frames



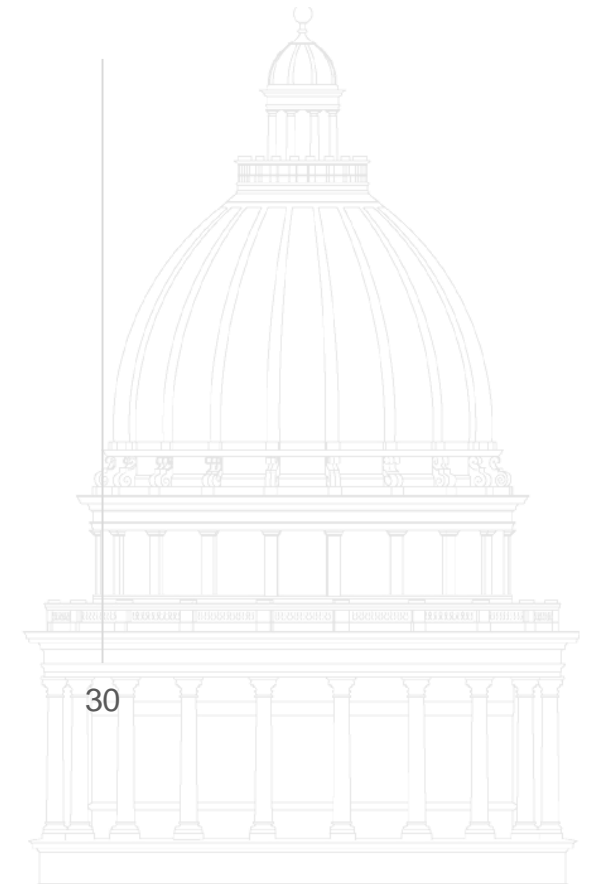
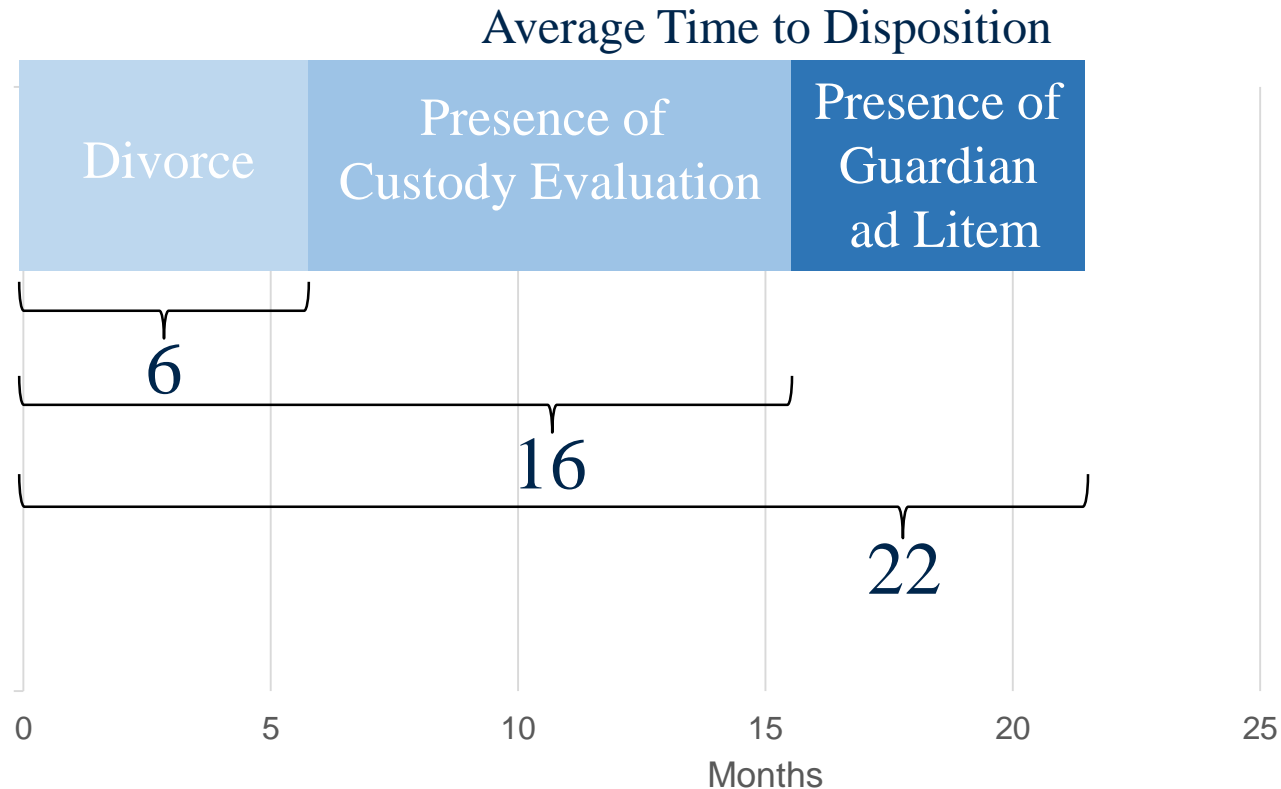
See Report: Page 12 - 13

Disputes Over Children Significantly Extend Time Frames



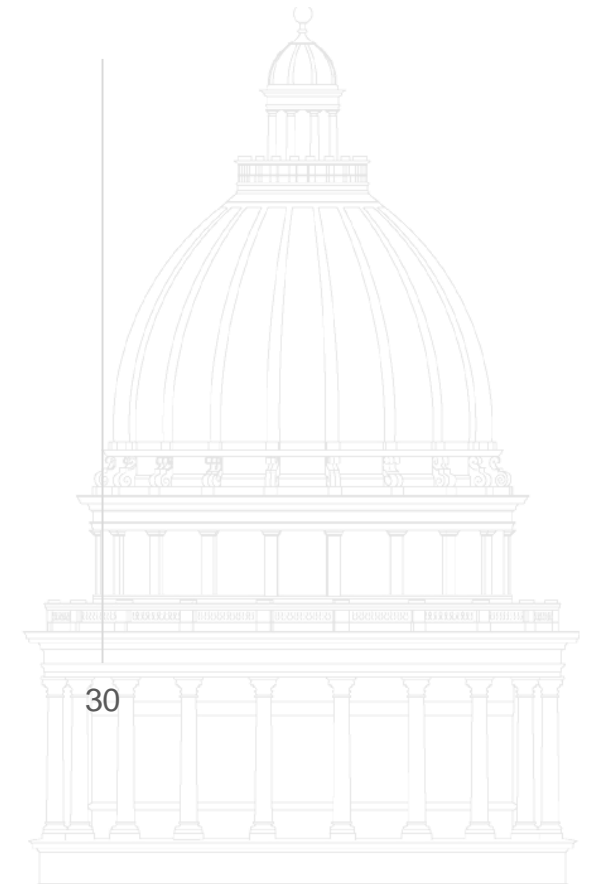
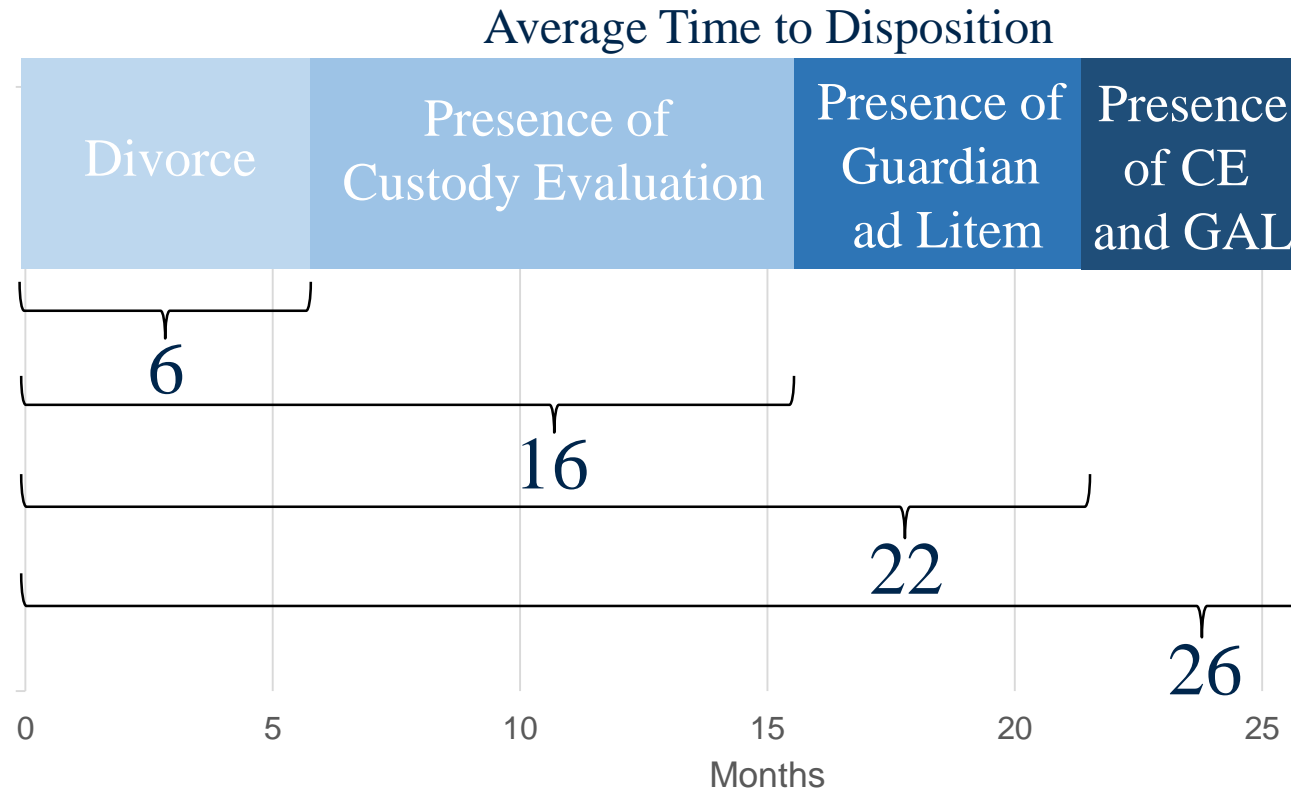
See Report: Page 12 - 13

Disputes Over Children Significantly Extend Time Frames



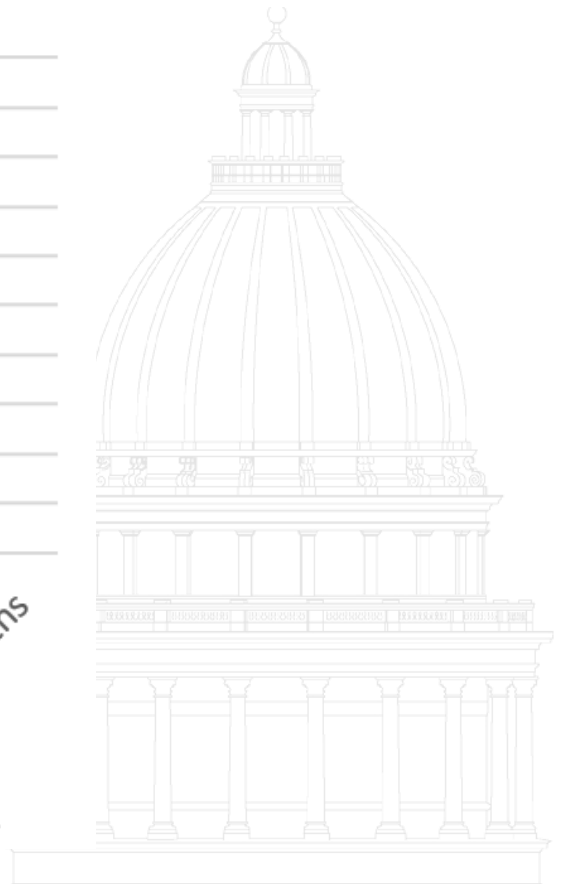
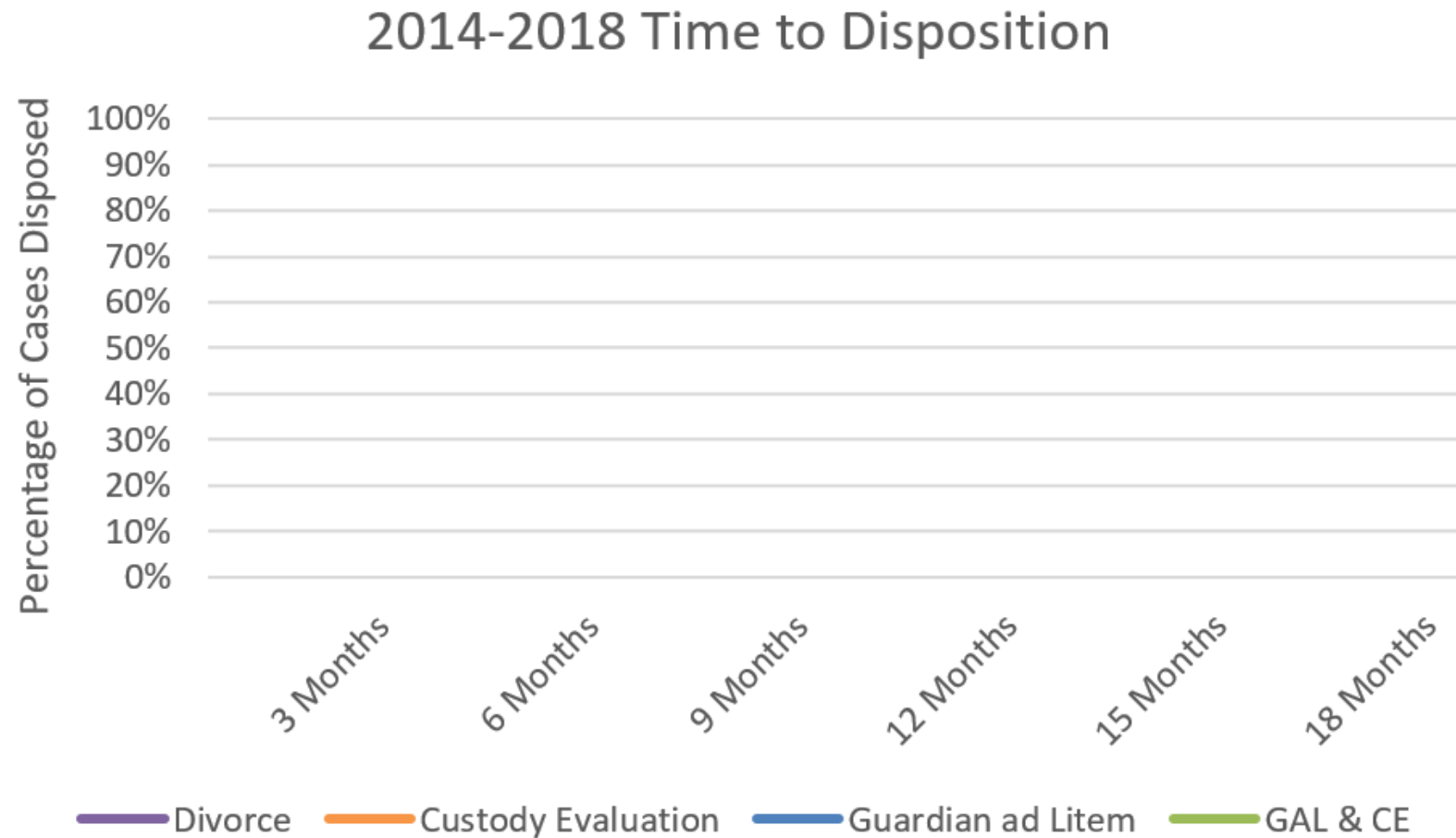
See Report: Page 12 - 13

Disputes Over Children Significantly Extend Time Frames



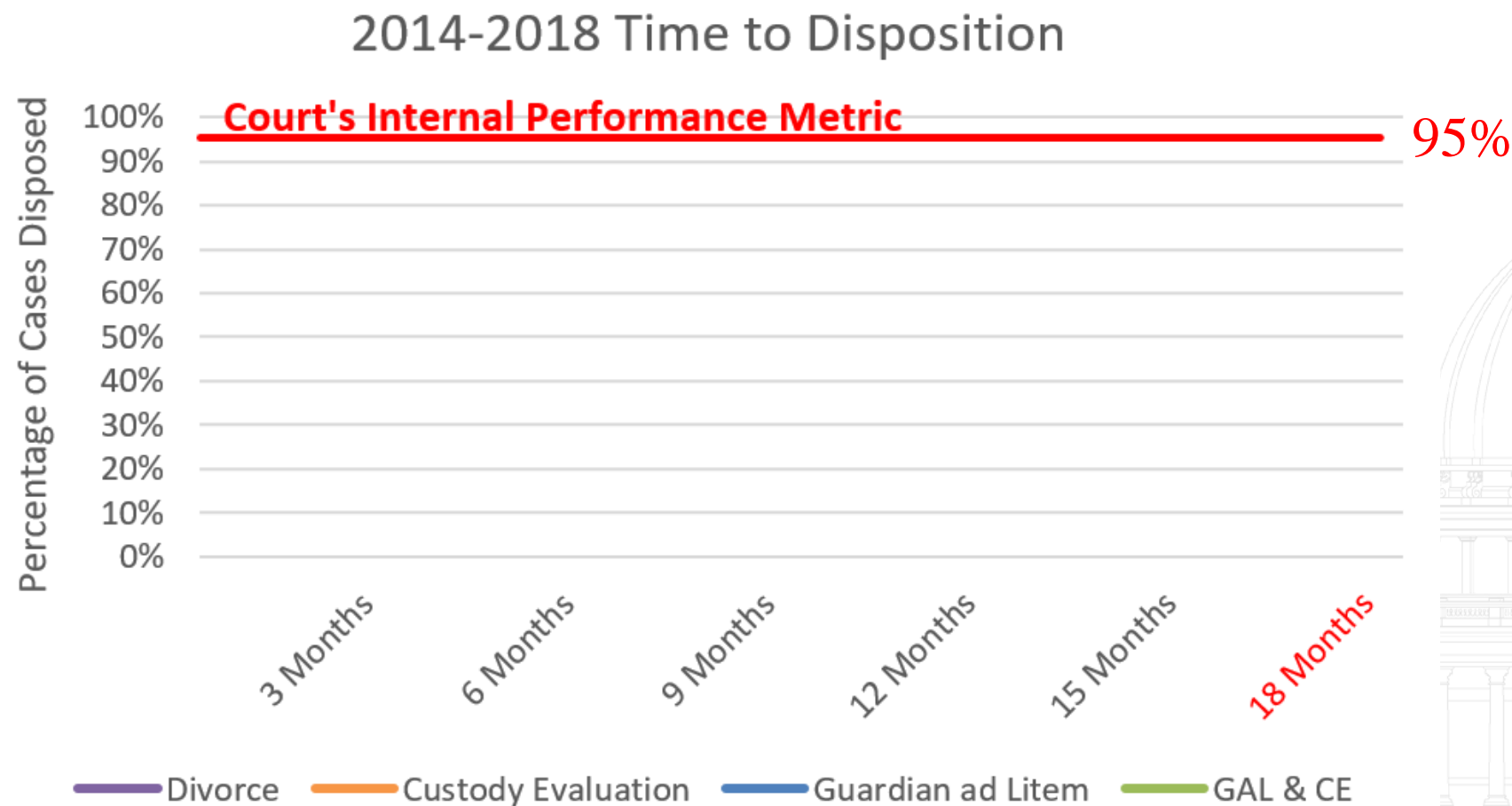
See Report: Page 12 - 13

Divorce Time to Disposition



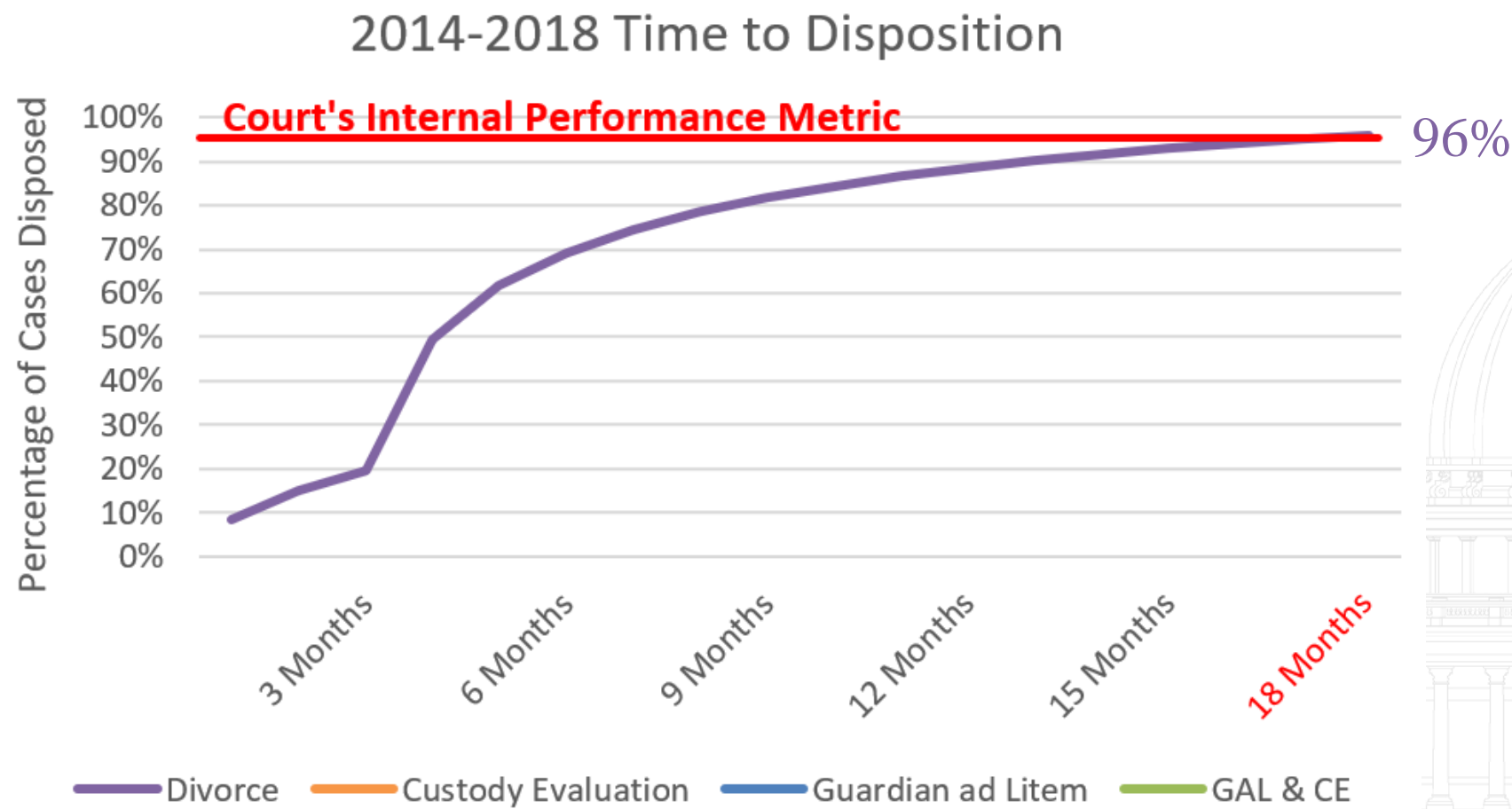
See Report: Page 13

Divorce Time to Disposition



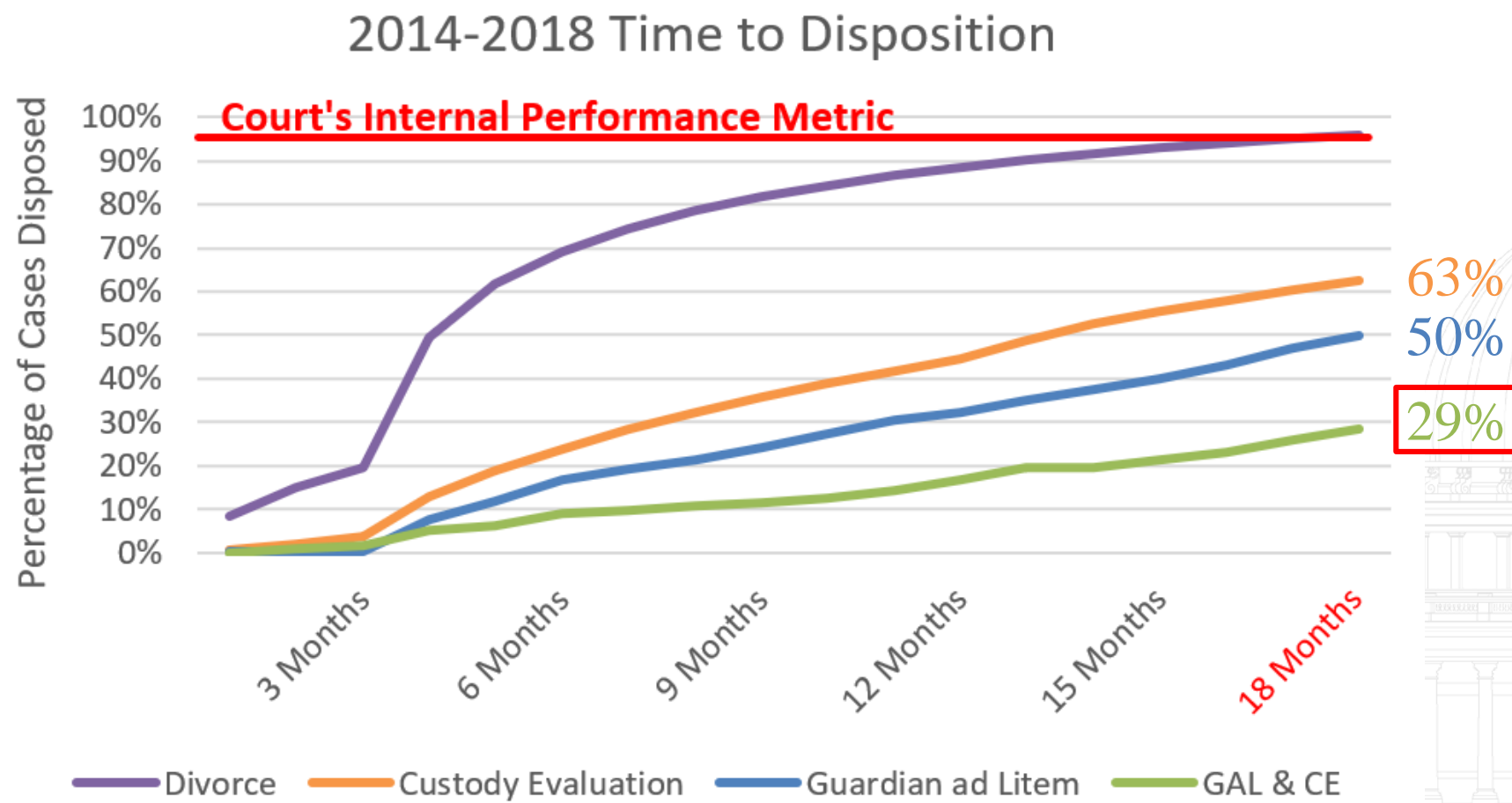
See Report: Page 13

Divorce Time to Disposition



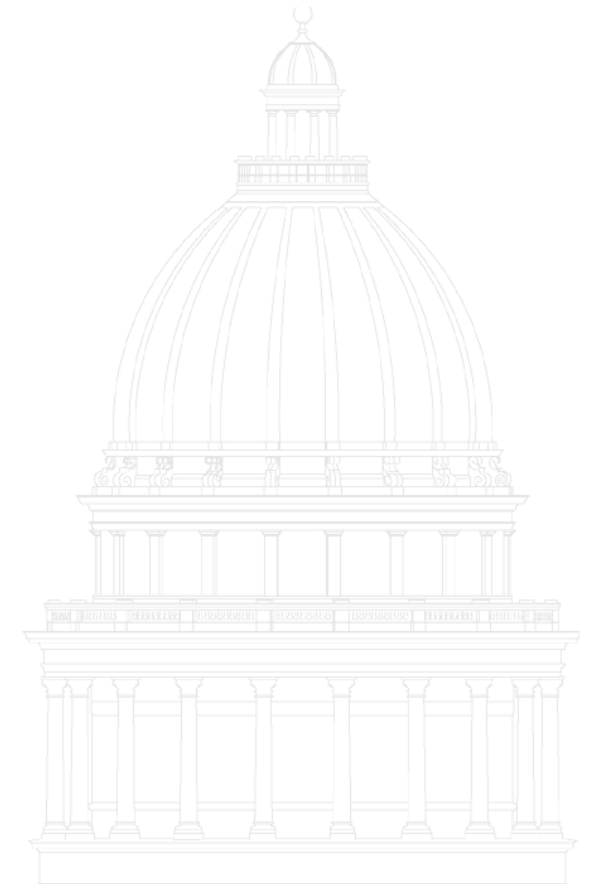
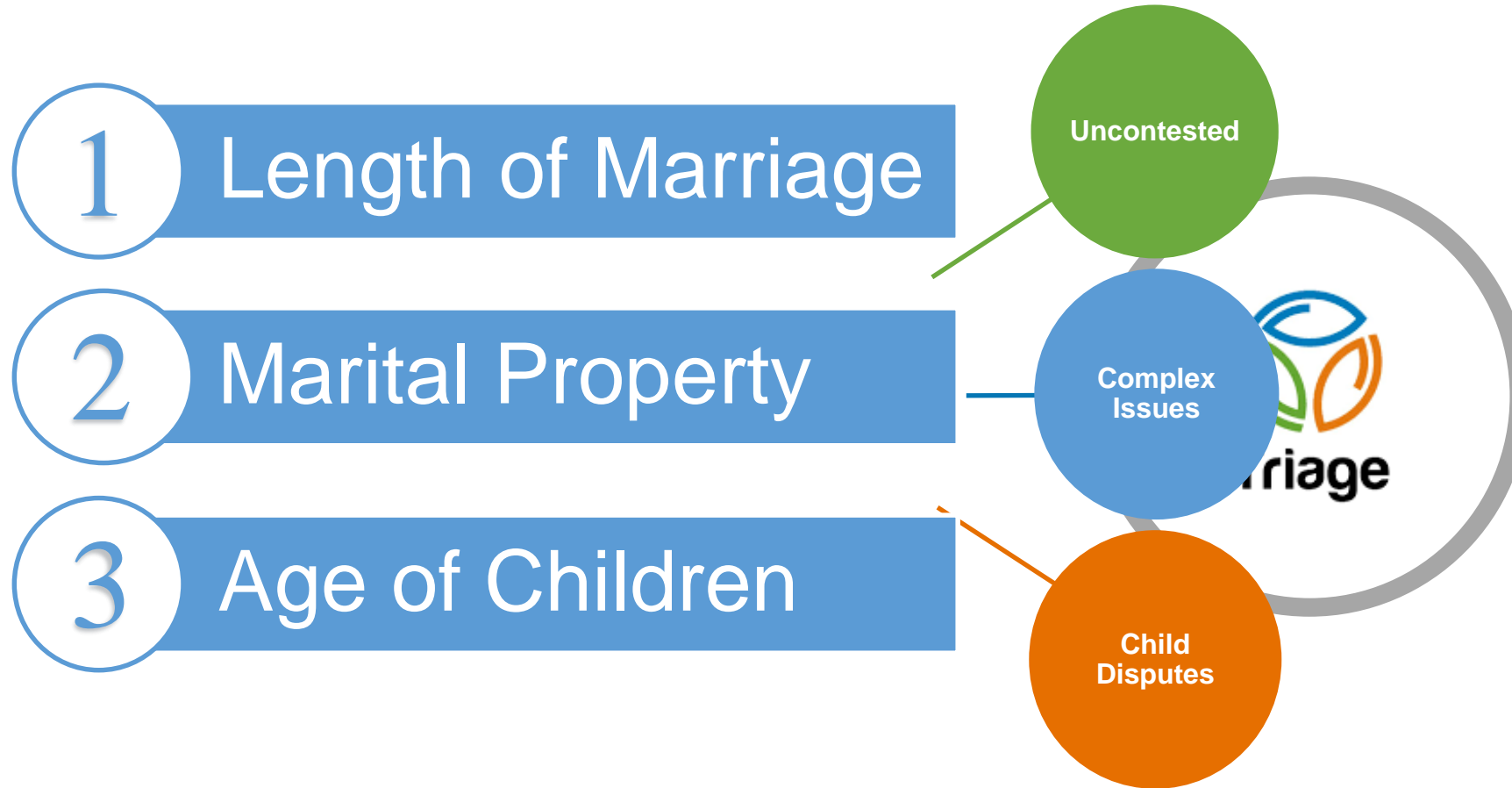
See Report: Page 13

Divorce Time to Disposition



See Report: Page 13

Triage of Divorce Cases Could Further Enhance Child Protections

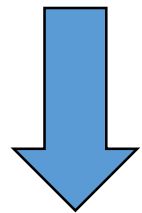


See Report: Page 14 - 15

Utah Uses a Domestic Case Management Program, Which Is a Form of Triage

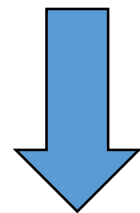
Average Time to Disposition

2nd District



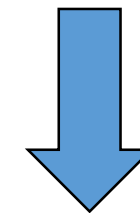
47 Day
Decrease

4th District



46 Day
Decrease

7th District



38 Day
Decrease

See Report: Page 15 - 16

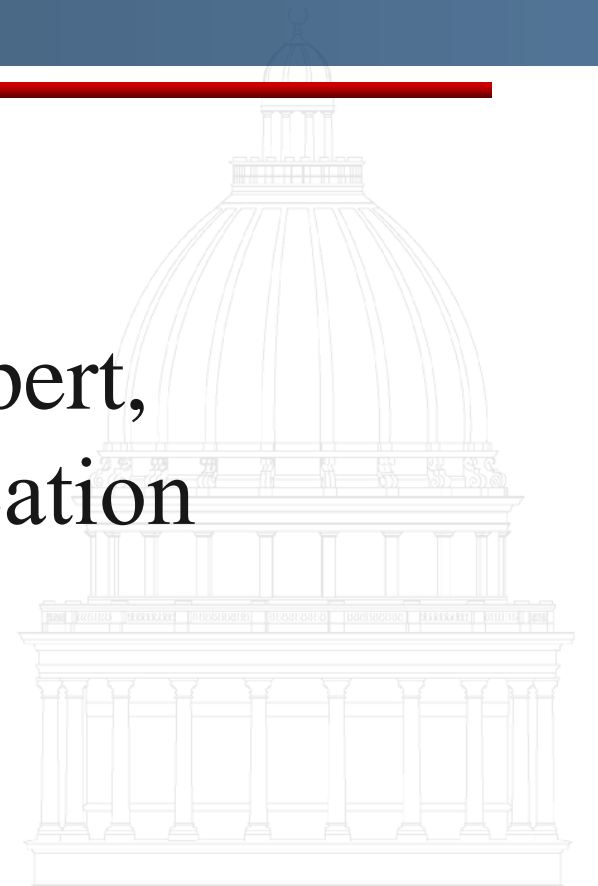
We Recommend...

- 1 Review the Use of Child Protective Orders in District Courts
- 2 Amend Rule to Limit the Use of Custody Evaluations
- 3 Study and Expand the Triage Program to Other Districts

See Report: Page 17

Chapter III

Training Requirements Vary by Expert, Special Masters' Role Needs Clarification



Child Welfare Experts Vary in Training Requirements and Court Oversight



Custody Evaluators



Special Masters



Parent Coordinators

See Report: Page 19 – 20

Court Personnel Comply with Annual Training Requirements

	Public Guardian ad Litem	Private Guardian ad Litem	District Court Judges & Commissioners	Juvenile Court Judges
Annual Training Requirement (Hours)	20	12	30	30
Annual Training Requirement Fulfilled?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Child Abuse and Neglect Training Required?	Yes	Yes	Offered/Not Required	Yes
Domestic Violence Training Required?	Offered/Not Required	Offered/Not Required	Offered/Not Required	Offered/Not Required

See Report: Page 20 - 21

Training Requirements Depend on The Child Welfare Experts' License

	Board Certified Psychiatrist	Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist	Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Annual Training Requirement (Hours)	20 Parent Coordinator Custody Evaluator	20 Parent Coordinator Custody Evaluator	20 Parent Coordinator Custody Evaluator
	Licensed Psychologist	Attorney	Volunteer
Annual Training Requirement (Hours)	24 Parent Coordinator Custody Evaluator Special Master*	12 Guardian ad Litem Special Master*	N/A Visitation Supervisor

See Report: Page 21 - 23

The Courts Need to Implement a Vetted Roster for Critical Child Welfare Experts

Vetted
Roster



Mediators



Guardians ad Litem

No
Roster



Custody Evaluators



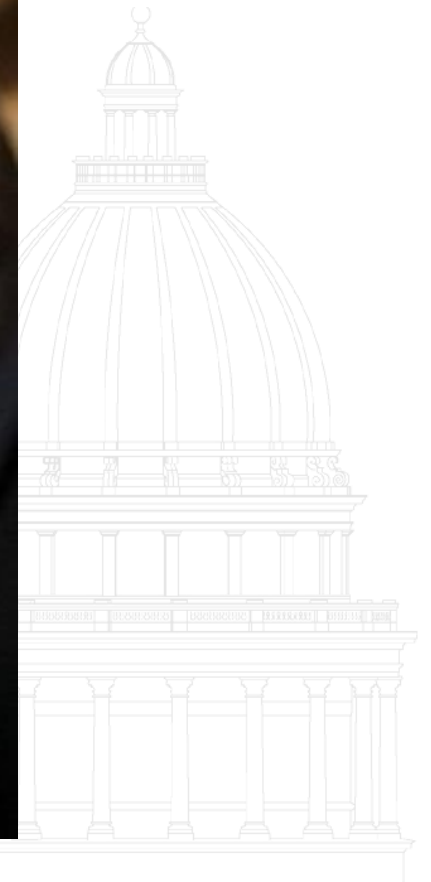
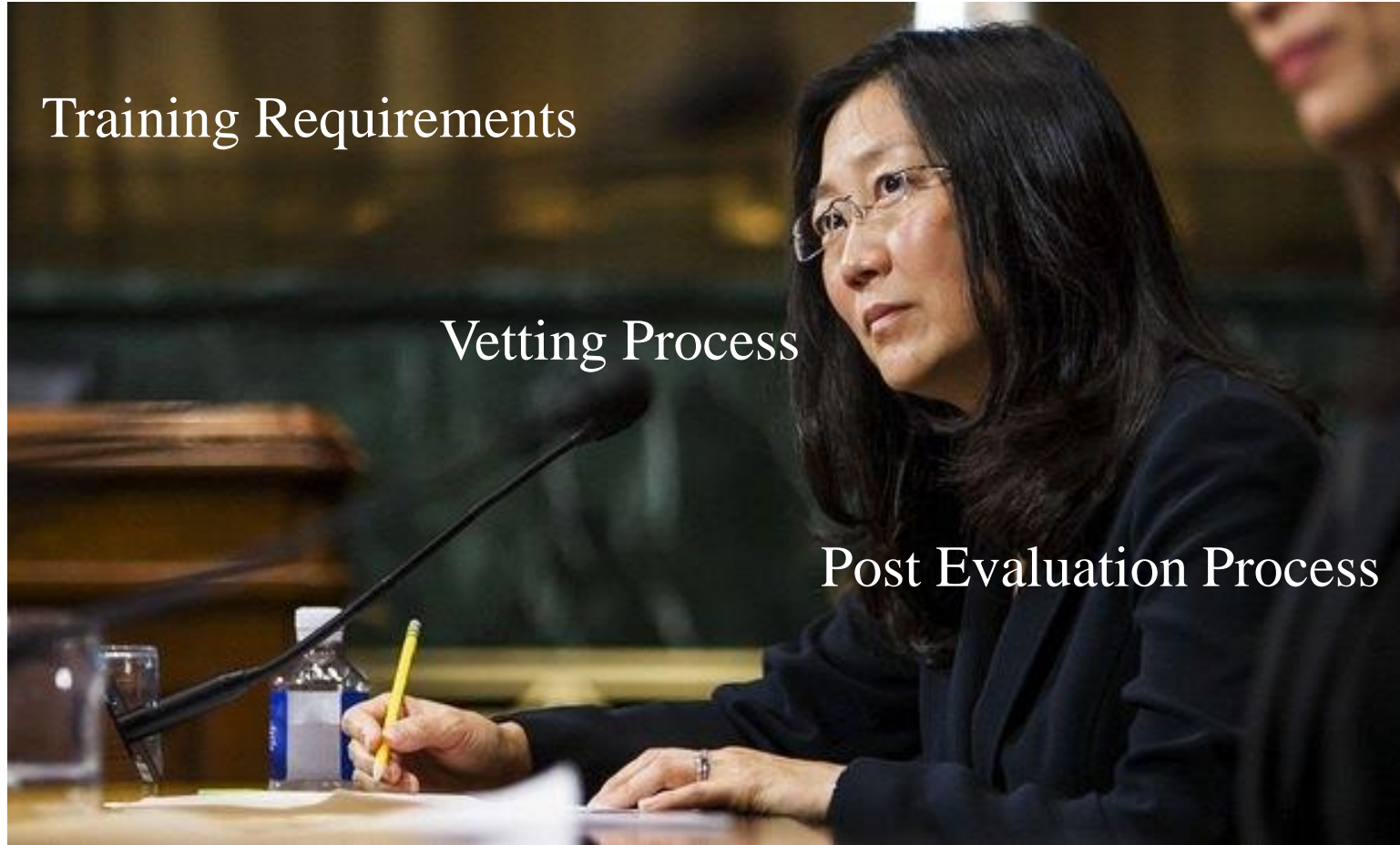
Special Masters



Parent Coordinators

See Report: Page 23 - 24

Special Masters' Role Needs Clarification



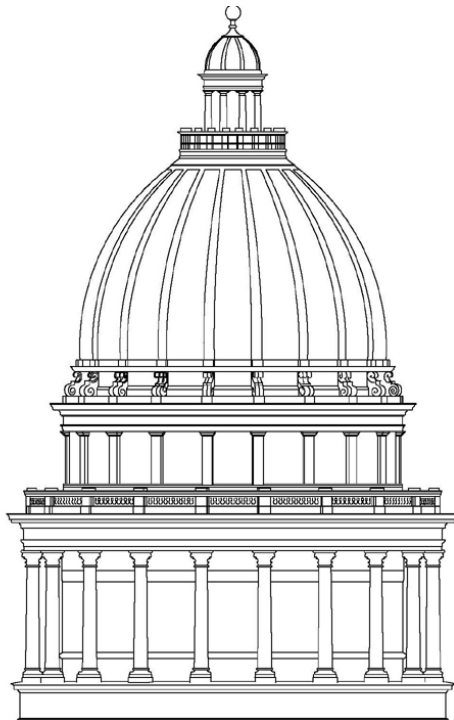
See Report: Page 24 - 27

We Recommend...

- 1 Enact a Rule Allowing Court Oversight of Child Welfare Experts
- 2 Expand the Court Roster to Include Additional Child Welfare Experts
- 3 Adopt Guidelines for the Use of Special Masters

See Report: Page 28

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